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Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth

The Michigan Cool City Pilot Program
Pre-Bid Workshop – Questions & Answers

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Following is a list of some of the common and key questions that were asked and responded to during the Pre-Bid Workshops held April 5 – 8, 2004.

General Cool Cities Initiatives Questions

Q: You've referred to the 25-30 year-old demographic, how about early 20's or late teens?
A: We want to retain and attract the workforce of today and tomorrow, that includes 20's and late teens. We need to find out why college students graduate and leave Michigan. We want them to stay in Michigan. What we are learning from the www.michigancoolcities.com survey, is that they want to live in a place that is happening with a walkable, safe community and a place that has arts and culture, diversity, jobs, and in many cases, a place where they would want to stay and raise a family. Cool Cities is for every one of all ages. One of the primary attributes of Cool Cities is that they are the communities that parents seek out for the cultural benefits available to everyone in the family – they are prime child rearing communities as well.

Q: When are the www.michigancoolcities.com survey results going to be posted?
A: Results will be posted with the launch of our Cool Cities website early June 2004.

Application Deadline

Q: Is the May 7, 2004, 5:00 p.m. deadline Eastern Standard Time?
A: Yes

Q: Do the applications need to be in your Office by 5:00 p.m. on May 7th or postmarked by May 7, 2004?
A: As outlined in the Request for Proposal, **the application must be in** the MSHDA, Lansing Office, **by 5:00 p.m. on May 7, 2004**. Receipt of application will not be based on postmark.

Application Questions

Q: Is there an on-line application that can be submitted on-line?
A: No; however, you can download a writeable application.

Q: Who should be the applicant?
A: Generally, Local Units of Government, non-profit organizations, quasi-governmental entities and for-profits in partnership with local units or nonprofits, can apply (depending on the requirements of particular state programs.) The applicant must be the local unit of government or the non-profit. Remember, we are focusing on city neighborhood projects.

Q: Is there a single applicant to The Cool City Pilot Program?
A: Yes

Q: If you have a for-profit entity, can it collaborate with a non-profit?
A: It can be collaborative but the non-profit would have to be the applicant.

Q: Are you expecting one application from each city or more than one?
A: More than one application can come from within the same city.
Q: Would multiple applications coming from the same city then be competing with each other?
A: Yes, they would be competing.

Q: How many applications would you like to see?
A: We're not placing an expectation on communities. At least 12 will be selected. This is pilot program and we don't know what we'll get in from anywhere in the State.

Q: How detailed should we get in the initial application?
A: You need to give us the detail. Make it clear and record the Resource Number from the Resource Toolbox on the application. The Resource Numbers are located in the left hand column of the Resource Toolbox.

Q: What do you want to see in the budget section?
A: We only want the budget for the Catalyst Grant part of your plan.

Q: How do you want it to come in…it says in the application that the submissions must be properly bound…what does that mean?
A: It means anything more heavy duty than staples.

Q: Can we submit pictures electronically using .jpg files?
A: Yes

Q: Any requirement for the application to be endorsed by your local City Commission or Council?
A: No

Q: Could the Local Cool City Advisory Group (LCCAG) affect your application?
A: No, but we encourage you to work with them.

Q: Are you going to ask for letters of support?
A: No, we will get back to the local unit of government and the LCCAG for support after projects near designation.

Q: Under the section on collaborators, are you looking for a name there?
A: Yes, please provide names and titles, and describe their role and activities.

Q: Explain accessibility "including universal design for life span inclusion" listed in the RFP?
A: When you think about universal design for life span inclusion make sure persons of different ages and abilities are considered in your plans. We want to move toward a neighborhood and community that anyone can access.

Q: Are you giving any priority points to each section?
A: No

Q: Is there some sort of scoring process involved in this in terms of eligibility?

A: There is going to be a scoring component. We will be looking at holistic approaches and its impact on neighborhoods, strengths of partnerships, private and public investment, feasibility on strength of plan, and capacity of the entity working with their partners and collaborators.

Q: When applying for the resources from the Resource Toolbox, what is different than the Catalyst Grant? Are there extra points?
A: For the 12 that are selected, as best as we are able, the state agencies that are participating will place a priority on the resources connected/identified with the project.

Questions Regarding "Neighborhood"

Q: Describe a neighborhood for me? Does it have to have a geographic boundary?
A: Ask yourself these questions…Do you live in a neighborhood? Do you know approximately what the boundaries of it are? Chances are, you do. It is how the residents define it. By the time we are done reading your application we want to see you are creating this neighborhood that we are talking about. It should be vibrant, mixed-use, where it is happening. The neighborhood can be downtown.

Q: You refer to boundaries that can be what? What if a building is used as mixed-use, can that be considered too?
A: We encourage a larger area. The Cool City Pilot City Program is focused on a neighborhood. Look at your area and make those connections, i.e., way finding, urban parks, service, employment.

Q: Does the project have to be within the city or can it be in the outlying area?
A: The project must be in a neighborhood with the boundaries in a Participating City; however, if a project is in an outlying area, they could be in collaboration with a Participating City.

Q: In terms of façade improvement, would it be for local area or a specific building?
A: We want it specific to a neighborhood.

Q: If you define more than one neighborhood, can you submit more than one application?
A: If you can define it then it would be okay to submit it. It would take a lot of work to submit a project for more than one neighborhood. Remember, the project must be started by December 31, 2004.

Q: Do the projects have to be year-round?
A: If this is something that is going to create the kind of neighborhood we are talking about, that is your call.

Q: Would a project like a bike path through town qualify?
A: We want to see walkable communities but we want a holistic approach for a specific neighborhood. We'd like to see a more comprehensive plan.

Q: Explain a bit more about private investment and collaborators?

A: We know that state resources and some level of a Catalyst Grant isn't what makes a neighborhood into a neighborhood. The State is going to solve all the neighborhood issues. You'll need a lot of local investment and collaboration.

Q: Is it possible to get funding for a scattered site project, i.e., different gardens in the city that fall under a non-profit?
A: It could be funded through traditional sources. We want to fund a defined neighborhood area consistent with the criteria listed under The Cool City Pilot Program.

Q: Shouldn't there be a two or three tier system where smaller cities have one criteria and larger cities another?
A: The best projects will rise to the top no matter the city size. Detroit is the largest city with many neighborhoods. There are many neighborhoods throughout the state. We will be evaluating the projects on a project-to-project basis no matter the size of the city it comes from. There may be more than one application from each city, possibly from the larger cities. We'll be evaluating each one on an individual basis.

Q: Does the Catalyst Grant project have to be in a particular size neighborhood?
A: No

The Cool City Pilot Program – Catalyst Grant

Q: Can a catalyst project be more than one item? Can it be a combination of 3 or 4 things?
A: Yes, remember we are going to be looking at something that has an impact on the neighborhood.

Q: Is there a maximum amount of $100,000?
A: Yes, but that is just the Catalyst Grant. There is no cap for the State resources (identified in the Resource Toolbox) that could potentially be available.

Q: Are you looking for projects that have an early timetable for implementation?
A: Yes, projects will need to be under contract by December 31, 2004.

Q: I understand the eligible catalyst projects cannot include soft cost but if it relates to an arts project, would it include some portion of staffing?
A: No, the Catalyst Grant does not intend to deal with staffing. It is not designed to address that need.

Q: Could you elaborate a little more about matching funds?
A: For the Catalyst Grant, there is no match required but we want to see leveraging of other resources and collaboration.

Q: Can the Catalyst Grant be used as a match fund for other State resources?
A: Yes

Q: Do the projects have to be completed in a year?

A: It's not required to be completed in a year, but we want projects that can be completed as soon as possible.

Q: If the Catalyst Grant is awarded in June, can it be started in June?
A: Yes, as soon as a contract between the State and the recipient is signed. We expect that to occur quickly.

Q: Can a Catalyst Grant be used for demolition?
A: Yes

Future of The Cool City Pilot Program

Q: When is the next round?
A: Early 2005

Q: Will there be at least 12 projects designated/selected next year?
A: Yes

Q: If we receive a Catalyst Grant this year, can we get another one next year?
A: Not for the same project and not for any projects in the same neighborhood.

Q: If I applied for a Catalyst Grant this year and was not selected, can I apply with the same project next year?
A: Yes

Q: Is the three-year funding amount expected to be steady?
A: We have a committed amount for the next two years for the Catalyst Grant. It is possible it will increase. We are hopeful to expand the resources in the Resource Toolbox.

Eligible Cities – Participating Cities – Local Cool City Advisory Groups

Q: You mentioned eligible communities are ones with a LCCAG in place. What is a LCCAG and how much involvement do you expect from them?
A: It is critical to have a diverse group of citizens from your community involved in the dialogue who can offer input into what makes a city "cool." We hope the group will focus their discussions on (1) what defines a Cool City, (2) how can the State best help your city, (3) what does a Cool City look like, how does it use its space, what kinds of services are offered, (4) what does your city do to attract jobs and people to your community, and (5) what does your city do to attract young professionals and young people to your community? The level of involvement is up to the LCCAG and the city. We will be connecting back with the Mayor's Office and the LCCAG for input on some of the applications.

Q: Who is in charge of forming the LCCAG?
A: The Mayor's Office.

Q: Can an existing DDA group qualify as a LCCAG?
A: A LCCAG can be a DDA, or any other pre-existing group; however, the main purpose of the LCCAG is to bring non-traditional folks to the table with traditional economic developers. It

would be fine, as long as citizens representing diverse ages, diversity, the arts community, etc., are involved.

Q: If your community was invited to participate but not a Participating City yet, how long does it take to get approved?
A: It is a simple and fast process that involves exchanging information. Contact Karen Gagnon, kgagno@michigan.gov or call 517-241-3203.

Q: If you haven't gotten a LCCAG formed yet, is it too late to get a group formed and send in an application?
A: No, but you may need some time for forming the LCCAG and to form a community plan. You could get an early start for next year.

Q: Is the Core Community list in the Eligible Cities List the same list as Home Team Advantage?
A: Yes

Q: What is the difference between Core Communities and Blue Prints?
A: Legislation enables a Core Community. Blue Print and Main Street cities are economic programs that a city must apply for.

Q: I noticed that townships are not on the eligible cities list. Is this correct?
A: Yes, for this first year of the Pilot Program, our main focus is on cities as a starting point. We'll re-evaluate for next year. There may be a few townships and villages on this year's list because they are part of Main Street or Blue Prints programs or sent a team to the December 2003 Creating Cool Conference.

Q: If you are a non-profit entity that wants to submit an application but reside in a city that is not a Participating City, can you still apply?
A: No, your application would not be eligible for consideration because the city must be a Participating City. To become a Participating City, the local unit of government should contact Karen Gagnon, kgagno@michigan.gov, and 517-241-3203.

Q: Can an individual with a DBA not associated with a local unit of government be eligible to apply?
A: If you are a for-profit developer, you must work with a local unit of government or a non-profit. A DBA or individual would have to have a strong collaboration with a local unit of government in order to apply.

Q: Are these grants based on population?
A: The eligible cities were identified by census data. The Catalyst Grants will not be based on population.

Resource Toolbox – Role of Other State Departments

Q: Explain the role of the State Departments and how the top 12 designated projects are handled?

A: Resources identified in designated projects will be reviewed expeditiously by a department liaison and a result identified as part of the notification package. This expedited review will be completed to the extent possible within the limits of the law.

Q: We received a grant a year ago, should we report that?
A: Yes, if you received it within the last year, it should be reported on the application.

Q: What happens to applications with identified resources that are not part of the top 12 designated projects?
A: We will refer the projects to the respective departments for their review and consideration for their resources through their traditional process. The applicant will be notified of the referral and will receive initial contact by the respective department by June 30, 2004.

Q: Is the roster of contacts for other State departments on the website?
A: You can access other State departments by going to www.michigan.gov and then select State Departments in the top menu bar. If you have questions about the resources, contact Julie Hales-Smith at halesj@michigan.gov or call 517-373-6026, and she will connect you with the appropriate Department Liaison.